

What is Bisexuality?

Bisexuality has different meanings for different people. Bisexuality can be defined as the potential of a person to be attracted physically, emotionally, and/or sexually to people regardless of their gender. In its simplest form bisexuality is the attraction of a person to men and women. More complex forms may include attractions to transgendered people - for example a married woman makes love to her husband while he crossdresses as a woman, or a lesbian in a relationship with a male identified pre-operative female to male transsexual.

More women than you think harbour bisexual feelings, dreams, and fantasies. Many keep them at that level. Others express them through close emotional, but non-sexual, friendships. Still other women rejoice in their bisexuality, whether out publicly or privately, in social or political settings, in their relationships, or just through sex. Some women discover their bisexuality at an early age while others find it emerges over time as they become aware of, and open to, life's possibilities. Some women, as do some men, try to ignore or suppress their feelings and deny who they really are. They may choose to call themselves straight or lesbian to fit the expectations of others or their own need to belong. One should strive to be true to one's self first through accepting one's feelings and accepting others. This can lead to more open, honest, caring, and fulfilling relationships and an inner peace and happiness. Some people falsely believe that bisexuality is about swinging with other couples or singles of both

genders. The truth is that bisexuality is about who you are not who you are with. That aside, most bisexual people tend to be attracted to one gender more or less than the other. The degree of attraction towards one or the other can also change over time, even from week to week. Many bisexual people live their lives in monogamous relationships, committed to one partner but aware of their attractions towards other men and women. Others may have serial monogamous relationships or live in triads or group relationships or have a primary relationship and secondary partners. Many now turn to bisexual support and social groups for friendships.

"In dealing with such issues (husband's bisexuality) I have examined my own sexuality. I have had to admit to myself that I too could be bisexual. I have acknowledged to myself that if I was looking for a partner again, I might not limit potential choices to just men. I have shared this with a few people close to me (including Peter). I have to thank Peter for providing a framework to explore this issue without a lot of negativity or guilt. I ponder why sexual orientation can change during a person's lifetime. I have also begun to question how much of an individual's sexual orientation is due to socialisation and how much is biological. Perhaps a lot more people who regard themselves as gay/lesbian or heterosexual, are in fact bisexual."

From "My Journey" by Octavia Filbert, 1995.

Why Choose a Bisexual Identity?

Why not!!! Choosing a bisexual identity to describe yourself is as valid as any other person who choose a gay, lesbian, queer, or straight identity. Whatever identity a person chooses, it should be their choice and not forced upon them by others or society, or subjected to criticism, harassment, or discrimination by others. Our sexual identity is only one of many identities we have: student, wife, mother, business woman, activist, poet, greenie, Aboriginal, Chinese, Australian, black, white, working class, feminist, lover, etc.

Some women choose bisexual labels that identify themselves further such as "Straight Identified Bisexual", "Bisexual Queer", "Bisexual Lesbian", or "Bisexual Dyke". Just "Bi" is often used.

Being bisexual is about being in touch with your feelings rather than who you're having sex with. It is about not limiting your options to one gender.

Your sexual identity can be a very private thing or a very public thing. It might be used in a very sexual way or a very political way. You may use it to describe the way you feel or the way you behave or the type of relationship you have. The way you express your bisexuality must ultimately be your choice for happiness.

Women HIV/AIDS & Sexual Health

Women are not immune to sexually transmitted diseases including the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV). Worldwide, women made up nearly half of the adults living with HIV/AIDS in 2003, up from 41 per cent in 1997. HIV is found in the vaginal secretions, in blood, semen (cum), and in the secretions inside the arse of infected people. Unprotected sex can transmit HIV and diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, herpes, genital warts, and hepatitis B from an infected person to an uninfected woman or man. A woman can transmit these diseases to another woman through infected vaginal and anal secretions or blood via fingers, fists, sex toys, or on the penis of a mutual male partner. The use of disposable gloves and condoms reduces the risk of infection. Use condoms and a water based lubricant when having intercourse with men. While the risk of HIV infection through oral sex is low, it has occurred and other sexually transmitted diseases can be transmitted during oral-vaginal, oral-anal, or oral-penile sex. A protective barrier such as a dental dam or condom can be used. HIV and some other infections can be transmitted from mother to baby in the womb, during birth, or with breast feeding. The sharing of needles to inject drugs or medication can transmit HIV, hepatitis B & C, and syphilis – so always use clean needles. Genital wart infections have been linked to cancer of the cervix and sexually active women should have regular pap smear screening. Vaccinations for hepatitis A and B are available from sexual health clinics or your doctor. Be wise, be safe.

Sydney Bifem Social Group

The Sydney Bifem Social Group and Online Community aim to enable women who identify as bisexual to come together, form friendships, and talk openly and freely about being bisexual in a relaxed, friendly, and safe environment.

Web: <http://bi.org.au/sbf/>
Email: sydneybifem@hotmail.com

Sydney Bisexual Network

SBN is a social and support group, based in Sydney. It has regular social activities and members undertake various activities to raise the awareness of bisexuality.

Web: <http://sbn.bi.org>
Email: sbn-admin@yahooogroups.com
Info line: (02) 9565 4281
Address: SBN
PO Box 281,
Broadway,
NSW 2007

Bi Pride Australia

BPA is the national representative activist body for Bi groups around Australia.

Web: bi.org.au/bpa
Email: bpa@bi.org.au
Address: Bi Pride Australia
P.O. Box 790,
Surry Hills,
NSW 2010

Women, Bisexuality, and Sexual Health.



*This brochure contains
information for bisexual
women and women
questioning their
sexuality.*